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Questions relating to information

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Rapporteur: Ms. Paula **Parviainen** (Finland)

I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2008, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixty-third session the item entitled "Questions relating to information" and to allocate it to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

2. The Fourth Committee considered the item at its 12th to 15th and 22nd meetings, from 20 to 23 October and on 5 November 2008 and held a general debate on the item at the 12th to 15th meetings (see A/C.4/63/SR.12-15 and 22).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Committee on Information;[1]

(b) Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/258).

4. At the 12th meeting, on 20 October, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in his capacity as Rapporteur of the Committee on Information, introduced the report of that Committee (see A/C.4/63/SR.12).

5. At the 14th meeting, on 22 October, the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information made a statement (see A/C.4/63/SR.14).

6. At the same meeting, the Committee held an interactive dialogue on the item in the form of a question and answer session, during which the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information responded to questions from

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/63/21).

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six Member States and one observer on various aspects of work of the Department (see A/C.4/63/SR.14).

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolutions A and B contained in paragraph 31 of the report of the Committee on Information and amendment to draft resolution B contained in document A/C.4/63/L.8

7. At its 22nd meeting, on 5 November, the Committee had before it draft resolutions A and B contained in paragraph 31 of the report of the Committee on Information,[1] and an amendment (A/C.4/63/L.8) to draft resolution B, proposed by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, by which the following two paragraphs would be added after paragraph 77:

> "*Considers it necessary* for the Department of Public Information to clearly identify practical improvements intended by the change from the *UN Chronicle* to 'UN Affairs', taking into account parity of languages, editorial policy, potential qualitative gains and other improvements and urges that the Department, while considering these aspects, place emphasis on cost-effective measures and the present budgetary constraints, and welcomes any other alternative in line with the mandate of the Department of Public Information for the consideration of Member States;
>
> "*Requests* the Department of Public Information to continue the *UN Chronicle* until a decision is taken on 'UN Affairs' or any other alternative in line with the mandate of the Department".

8. At the same meeting, the representative of Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, orally corrected the amendment (see A/C.4/63/SR.22).

9. Also at the same meeting, the Secretary of the Committee informed the Fourth Committee that there were no programme budget implications relating to the draft resolutions.

10. At the same meeting, the representative of Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, made a statement in explanation of position before the adoption of the draft resolutions (see A/C.4/63/SR.22).

11. Also at its 22nd meeting, the Committee adopted, without a vote, draft resolutions A and B contained in paragraph 31 of the report of the Committee on Information and the amendment contained in document A/C.4/63/L.8, as corrected (see para. 14).

B. Draft decision contained in paragraph 31 of the report of the Committee on Information

12. At its 22nd meeting, on 5 November, the Committee had before it a draft decision contained in paragraph 31 of the report of the Committee on Information.[1]

13. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote (see para. 15).

III. Recommendations of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

14. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Questions relating to information

A
Information in the service of humanity

The General Assembly,

Taking note of the comprehensive and important report of the Committee on Information,[1]

Also taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on questions relating to information,[2]

Urges all countries, organizations of the United Nations system as a whole and all others concerned, reaffirming their commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as to those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of the media, deeply concerned by the disparities existing between developed and developing countries and the consequences of every kind arising from those disparities that affect the capability of the public, private or other media and individuals in developing countries to disseminate information and communicate their views and their cultural and ethical values through endogenous cultural production, as well as to ensure the diversity of sources and their free access to information, and recognizing the call in this context for what in the United Nations and at various international forums has been termed "a new world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process":

(a) To cooperate and interact with a view to reducing existing disparities in information flows at all levels by increasing assistance for the development of communications infrastructures and capabilities in developing countries, with due regard for their needs and the priorities attached to such areas by those countries, and in order to enable them and the public, private or other media in developing countries to develop their own information and communications policies freely and independently and increase the participation of media and individuals in the communication process, and to ensure a free flow of information at all levels;

(b) To ensure for journalists the free and effective performance of their professional tasks and condemn resolutely all attacks against them;

(c) To provide support for the continuation and strengthening of practical training programmes for broadcasters and journalists from public, private and other media in developing countries;

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/63/21).

[2] A/63/258.

(d) To enhance regional efforts and cooperation among developing countries, as well as cooperation between developed and developing countries, to strengthen communications capacities and to improve the media infrastructure and communications technology in the developing countries, especially in the areas of training and dissemination of information;

(e) To aim at, in addition to bilateral cooperation, providing all possible support and assistance to the developing countries and their media, public, private or other, with due regard to their interests and needs in the field of information and to action already adopted within the United Nations system, including:

(i) The development of the human and technical resources that are indispensable for the improvement of information and communications systems in developing countries and support for the continuation and strengthening of practical training programmes, such as those already operating under both public and private auspices throughout the developing world;

(ii) The creation of conditions that will enable developing countries and their media, public, private or other, to have, by using their national and regional resources, the communications technology suited to their national needs, as well as the necessary programme material, especially for radio and television broadcasting;

(iii) Assistance in establishing and promoting telecommunication links at the subregional, regional and interregional levels, especially among developing countries;

(iv) The facilitation, as appropriate, of access by the developing countries to advanced communications technology available on the open market;

(f) To provide full support for the International Programme for the Development of Communication of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,[3] which should support both public and private media.

B

United Nations public information policies and activities

The General Assembly,

Emphasizing the role of the Committee on Information as its main subsidiary body mandated to make recommendations to it relating to the work of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat,

Reaffirming its resolution 13 (I) of 13 February 1946, establishing the Department of Public Information, which states in paragraph 2 of annex I that "the activities of the Department should be so organized and directed as to promote to the greatest possible extent an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations among the peoples of the world",

Emphasizing that the contents of public information and communications should be placed at the heart of the strategic management of the United Nations and that a culture of communications and transparency should permeate all levels of the

[3] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Twenty-first Session, Belgrade, 23 September-28 October 1980*, vol. I, *Resolutions*, sect. III.4, resolution 4/21.

Organization, as a means of fully informing the peoples of the world of the aims and activities of the United Nations, in accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in order to create broad-based global support for the United Nations,

Stressing that the primary mission of the Department of Public Information is to provide, through its outreach activities, accurate, impartial, comprehensive, timely and relevant information to the public on the tasks and responsibilities of the United Nations in order to strengthen international support for the activities of the Organization with the greatest transparency,

Recalling the comprehensive review of the work of the Department of Public Information, requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/253 of 24 December 2001, as well as the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change"[4] and Assembly resolutions 57/300 of 20 December 2002 and 60/109 B of 8 December 2005, which provided an opportunity to take due steps to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department and to maximize the use of its resources,

Expressing its concern that the gap in information and communications technology between the developed and the developing countries has continued to widen and that vast segments of the population in developing countries are not benefiting from the present information and communications technologies, and, in this regard, underlining the necessity of rectifying the imbalances in the present development of information and communications technologies in order to make it more just, equitable and effective,

Recognizing that developments in information and communications technologies open vast new opportunities for economic growth and social development and can play an important role in the eradication of poverty in developing countries, and, at the same time, emphasizing that the development of these technologies poses challenges and risks and could lead to the further widening of disparities between and within countries,

Recalling its resolution 61/266 of 16 May 2007 on multilingualism, and emphasizing the importance of making appropriate use of the official languages of the United Nations in the activities of the Department of Public Information, with the aim of eliminating the disparity between the use of English and the five other official languages,

Welcoming Antigua and Barbuda and Zambia to membership in the Committee on Information,

I
Introduction

1. *Reaffirms* its resolution 13 (I), in which it established the Department of Public Information, and all other relevant resolutions of the General Assembly related to the activities of the Department, and requests the Secretary-General, in respect of the public information policies and activities of the United Nations, to continue to implement fully the recommendations contained in paragraph 2 of its

[4] A/57/387 and Corr.1.

resolution 48/44 B of 10 December 1993 and other mandates as established by the General Assembly;

2. *Also reaffirms* that the United Nations remains the indispensable foundation of a peaceful and just world and that its voice must be heard in a clear and effective manner, and emphasizes the essential role of the Department of Public Information in this context;

3. *Stresses* the importance of the clear, timely, accurate and comprehensive provision of information by the Secretariat to Member States, upon their request, within the framework of existing mandates and procedures;

4. *Reaffirms* the central role of the Committee on Information in United Nations public information policies and activities, including the prioritization of those activities, and decides that recommendations relating to the programme of the Department of Public Information shall originate, to the extent possible, in the Committee and shall be considered by the Committee;

5. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, following the priorities laid down by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/235 of 22 December 2006, and guided by the United Nations Millennium Declaration[5] and reaffirming the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[6] to pay particular attention to peace and security, development and human rights and to major issues such as the eradication of poverty, including the global food crisis, conflict prevention, sustainable development, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and the needs of the African continent;

6. *Also requests* the Department of Public Information to pay particular attention to progress in implementing the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and the outcomes of the major related United Nations summits and conferences in carrying out its activities;

7. *Further requests* the Department of Public Information and its network of United Nations information centres to play an active role in raising public awareness of the global challenge of climate change, and encourages the Department to pay particular attention to the actions taken in the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[7] in accordance with the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities, especially in the context of the forthcoming sessions of the Conference of the Parties and of the Meetings of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol[8] to be held in Poznan, Poland, from 1 to 12 December 2008 and in Copenhagen from 30 November to 11 December 2009;

8. *Reaffirms* the need to enhance the technological infrastructure of the Department of Public Information on a continuous basis in order to widen its outreach and to continue to improve the United Nations website;

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[5] See resolution 55/2.

[6] See resolution 60/1.

[7] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[8] FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

II
General activities of the Department of Public Information

9. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information;[9]

10. *Requests* the Department of Public Information to maintain its commitment to a culture of evaluation and to continue to evaluate its products and activities with the objective of improving their effectiveness, and to continue to cooperate and coordinate with Member States and the Office of Internal Oversight Services of the Secretariat;

11. *Reaffirms* the importance of more effective coordination between the Department of Public Information and the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure consistency in the messages of the Organization;

12. *Encourages* continued collaboration between the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the promotion of culture and in the fields of education and communication, bridging the existing gap between the developed and the developing countries;

13. *Reaffirms* that the Department of Public Information must prioritize its work programme, while respecting existing mandates and in line with regulation 5.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation,[10] to focus its message and better concentrate its efforts and to match its programmes with the needs of its target audiences, on the basis of improved feedback and evaluation mechanisms;

14. *Notes* the efforts of the Department of Public Information to continue to publicize the work and decisions of the General Assembly, and requests the Department to continue to enhance its working relationship with the Office of the President of the General Assembly;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to exert all efforts to ensure that publications and other information services of the Secretariat, including the United Nations website and the United Nations News Service, contain comprehensive, objective and equitable information in all official languages about the issues before the Organization and that they maintain editorial independence, impartiality, accuracy and full consistency with resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly;

16. *Requests* the Department of Public Information and content-providing offices of the Secretariat to ensure that United Nations publications are produced in a cost-effective manner and to continue to coordinate closely with all other entities, including all other departments of the Secretariat and funds and programmes of the United Nations system, in order to avoid duplication, within their respective mandates, in the issuance of United Nations publications;

17. *Emphasizes* that the Department of Public Information should maintain and improve its activities in the areas of special interest to developing countries and

[9] A/AC.198/2008/2 and 3.

[10] ST/SGB/2000/8.

where appropriate, other countries with special needs, and that the activities of the Department should contribute to bridging the existing gap between the developing and the developed countries in the crucial field of public information and communications;

18. *Notes* the issuance of daily press releases, and requests the Department of Public Information to continue to improve their production process and streamline their format, structure and length, keeping in mind the views of Member States, including their views on expanding them to the other official languages;

19. *Notes with appreciation* the efforts of the Department of Public Information to work at the local level with other organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to enhance the coordination of their communications activities, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its thirty-first session on progress achieved in this regard and on the activities of the United Nations Communications Group;

20. *Calls upon* the Department of Public Information, recognizing the importance of audio-visual archives in preserving our common heritage, to continue to examine its policies and activities regarding the durable preservation of its radio, television and photographic archives and to take action within existing resources in ensuring that such archives are preserved and are accessible, and encourages the Department to work further with all interested partners in order to reach that objective;

Multilingualism and public information

21. *Emphasizes* the importance of making appropriate use and ensuring equitable treatment of all the official languages of the United Nations in all the activities of the Department of Public Information, including in presentations to the Committee on Information, with the aim of eliminating the disparity between the use of English and the five other official languages;

22. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to ensure that the Department of Public Information has appropriate staffing capacity in all the official languages of the United Nations to undertake all its activities and to include this aspect in future programme budget proposals for the Department , bearing in mind the principle of parity of all six official languages, while respecting the workload of each official language;

23. *Welcomes* the ongoing efforts of the Department of Public Information to enhance multilingualism in all its activities, and stresses the importance of fully implementing its resolution 61/266 by ensuring that the texts of all new public documents in all six official languages and information materials of the United Nations are made available daily through the United Nations website and are accessible to Member States without delay;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue towards completion of the task of uploading all important older United Nations documents on the United Nations website in all six official languages on a priority basis, so that these archives are also available to Member States through that medium;

Bridging the digital divide

25. *Recalls with satisfaction* its resolution 60/252 of 27 March 2006, in which it endorsed the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society,[11] as adopted at the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005, and proclaimed 17 May annual World Information Society Day, recalls the adoption of the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action[12] at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003, and in this regard requests the Department of Public Information to contribute to the celebration of this event and to play a role in raising awareness of the possibilities that the use of the Internet and other information and communications technologies can bring to societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide;

26. *Calls upon* the Department of Public Information to contribute to raising the awareness of the international community of the importance of the implementation of the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society;

Network of United Nations information centres

27. *Emphasizes* the importance of the network of United Nations information centres in enhancing the public image of the United Nations and in disseminating messages on the United Nations to local populations, especially in developing countries;

28. *Welcomes* the work done by the network of United Nations information centres in favour of the publication of United Nations information materials and the translation of important documents in languages other than the official languages of the United Nations, with a view to reaching the widest possible spectrum of audiences and extending the United Nations message to all the corners of the world in order to strengthen international support for the activities of the Organization, and encourages the continuation of efforts in this regard;

29. *Stresses* the importance of rationalizing the network of United Nations information centres, and, in this regard, requests the Secretary-General to continue to make proposals in this direction, including through the redeployment of resources where necessary, and to report to the Committee on Information at its successive sessions;

30. *Reaffirms* that the rationalization of United Nations information centres must be carried out on a case-by-case basis in consultation with all concerned Member States in which existing information centres are located, the countries served by those information centres and other interested countries in the region, taking into consideration the distinctive characteristics of each region;

31. *Recognizes* that the network of United Nations information centres, especially in developing countries, should continue to enhance its impact and activities, including through strategic communications support, and calls upon the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of this approach to the Committee on Information at its successive sessions;

[11] See A/60/687.

[12] See A/C.2/59/3, annex.

32. *Encourages* the Department of Public Information, through the information centres, to strengthen its cooperation with all other United Nations entities at the country level, in order to enhance coherence in communications and to avoid duplication of work;

33. *Stresses* the importance of taking into account the special needs and requirements of developing countries in the field of information and communications technology for the effective flow of information in those countries;

34. *Also stresses* that the Department of Public Information, through the network of United Nations information centres, should continue to promote public awareness of and mobilize support for the work of the United Nations at the local level, bearing in mind that information in local languages has the strongest impact on local populations;

35. *Further stresses* the importance of efforts to strengthen the outreach activities of the United Nations to those Member States remaining outside the network of United Nations information centres, and encourages the Secretary-General, within the context of rationalization, to extend the services of the network of United Nations information centres to those Member States;

36. *Stresses* that the Department of Public Information should continue to review the allocation of both staff and financial resources to the United Nations information centres in developing countries, emphasizing the needs of the least developed countries;

37. *Encourages* the network of United Nations information centres to continue to develop web pages in local languages, encourages the Department of Public Information to provide necessary resources and technical facilities, and encourages host countries to respond to the needs of the information centres;

38. *Takes note* of the proposal by the Secretary-General to work closely with the Governments concerned to explore the possibility of identifying rent-free premises, while taking into account the economic condition of the host countries and bearing in mind that such support should not be a substitute for the full allocation of financial resources for the information centres in the context of the programme budget of the United Nations;

39. *Also takes note* of the strengthening of the information centres in Cairo, Mexico City and Pretoria, and encourages the Secretary-General to explore the strengthening of other centres, especially in Africa, in cooperation with the Member States concerned and within existing resources;

40. *Recalls* the offer made by the Government of Angola to host a United Nations information centre in Luanda to address the special needs of Portuguese-speaking African countries, through the provision of rent-free premises, and regrets the lack of progress in this regard, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its thirty-first session on the measures necessary, including the budgetary requirements, to accommodate those needs, as well as any proposal to move this process forward;

III
Strategic communications services

41. *Reaffirms* the role of the strategic communications services in devising and disseminating United Nations messages by developing communications strategies, in close collaboration with the substantive departments, United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, in full compliance with their legislative mandates;

Promotional campaigns

42. *Appreciates* the work of the Department of Public Information in promoting, through its campaigns, issues of importance to the international community, such as the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the progress made in implementing the internationally agreed development goals, United Nations reform, the eradication of poverty, conflict prevention, sustainable development, disarmament, decolonization, human rights, including the rights of women and children and of persons with disabilities, strategic coordination in humanitarian relief, especially in natural disasters and other crises, HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases, the needs of the African continent and combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, as well as dialogue among civilizations, the culture of peace and tolerance and the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster;

43. *Commends* the role of the Department of Public Information in observing the first International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and looks forward to its further work in promoting the establishment of the permanent memorial to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade;

44. *Requests* the Department, in this regard, in cooperation with the countries concerned and with the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, to continue to take appropriate measures to enhance world public awareness of these and other important global issues;

45. *Stresses* the need to continue the renewed emphasis in support of Africa's development, in particular by the Department of Public Information, in order to promote awareness in the international community of the nature of the critical economic and social situation in Africa and of the priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;[13]

46. *Recognizes* the role of the Department of Public Information and its network of United Nations information centres in commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;[14]

Role of the Department of Public Information in United Nations peacekeeping operations

47. *Commends* the role of the Department of Public Information and its network of United Nations information centres in commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping;

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[13] A/57/304, annex.

[14] Resolution 217 A (III).

48. *Requests* the Secretariat to continue to ensure the involvement of the Department of Public Information from the planning stage of future peacekeeping operations through interdepartmental consultations and coordination with other departments of the Secretariat, in particular with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support;

49. *Stresses* the importance of enhancing the public information capacity of the Department of Public Information in the field of peacekeeping operations and its role, in close cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, in the process of selecting public information staff for United Nations peacekeeping operations or missions, and, in this regard, invites the Department of Public Information to second public information staff who have the necessary skills to fulfil the tasks of the operations or missions, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution in accordance with Chapter XV, Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, and to consider views expressed, especially by host countries, when appropriate, in this regard;

50. *Emphasizes* the importance of the peacekeeping gateway on the United Nations website, and requests the Department of Public Information to continue its efforts in supporting the peacekeeping missions to further develop their websites;

51. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support to continue their cooperation in raising awareness of the new realities, far-reaching successes and challenges faced by peacekeeping operations, especially multidimensional and complex ones, and the recent surge in United Nations peacekeeping activities, and welcomes efforts by the three Departments to develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy on current challenges facing United Nations peacekeeping;

52. *Requests* the Department of Public Information and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to continue to cooperate in implementing an effective outreach programme to explain the zero-tolerance policy of the Organization regarding sexual exploitation and abuse and to inform the public of the outcome of all such cases involving peacekeeping personnel, including cases where allegations are ultimately found to be legally unproven, and also to inform the public of the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel;[15]

Role of the Department of Public Information in strengthening dialogue among civilizations and the culture of peace as means of enhancing understanding among nations

53. *Recalls* its resolutions on dialogue among civilizations and the culture of peace,[16] requests the Department of Public Information, while ensuring the pertinence and relevance of subjects for promotional campaigns under this issue, to continue to provide the necessary support for the dissemination of information pertaining to dialogue among civilizations and the culture of peace, as well as the initiative on the Alliance of Civilizations, and to take due steps in fostering the

[15] Resolution 62/214, annex.

[16] Resolutions 52/15, 53/22, 53/25, 55/23, 56/6, 59/142 and 60/4.

culture of dialogue among civilizations and promoting cultural understanding, tolerance, respect for and freedom of religion or belief and effective enjoyment by all of all human rights and civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, recognizes the efforts made by the High Representative of the Secretary-General for the Alliance of Civilizations, and takes note of the initiatives launched at the first Alliance of Civilizations Forum, held in Madrid on 15 and 16 January 2008;

IV
News services

54. *Stresses* that the central objective of the news services implemented by the Department of Public Information is the timely delivery of accurate, objective and balanced news and information emanating from the United Nations system in all four mass media, namely, print, radio, television and the Internet, to the media and other audiences worldwide, with the overall emphasis on multilingualism, and reiterates its request to the Department to ensure that all news-breaking stories and news alerts are accurate, impartial and free of bias;

55. *Emphasizes* the importance of the Department of Public Information continuing to draw the attention of world media to stories that do not obtain prominent coverage, through the initiative entitled "10 Stories the World Should Hear More About" and through video and audio coverage by United Nations Television and United Nations Radio;

Traditional means of communication

56. *Welcomes* the initiative of United Nations Radio, which remains one of the most effective and far-reaching traditional media available to the Department of Public Information and an important instrument in United Nations activities, to enhance its live radio broadcasting service by making more frequently updated reports in all six official languages and features available to broadcasters on a daily basis on all United Nations activities, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to make every effort to achieve parity in the six official languages in United Nations Radio productions;

57. *Notes* the efforts being made by the Department of Public Information to disseminate programmes directly to broadcasting stations all over the world in the six official languages, with the addition of Portuguese and Kiswahili, as well as in other languages where possible;

58. *Requests* the Department of Public Information to continue building partnerships with local, national and regional broadcasters to extend the United Nations message to all the corners of the world in an accurate and impartial way, and requests the Radio and Television Service of the Department to continue to take full advantage of the technological infrastructure made available in recent years;

United Nations website

59. *Reaffirms* that the United Nations website is an essential tool for the media, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, Member States and the general public, and, in this regard, reiterates the continued need for efforts by the Department of Public Information to maintain and improve it;

60. *Recognizes* the efforts made by the Department of Public Information to implement the basic accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities to access the United Nations website, and calls upon the Department to continue to work towards compliance with accessibility requirements on all new and updated pages of the website, with the aim of ensuring its accessibility for persons with different kinds of disabilities;

61. *Takes note* of the fact that the multilingual development and enrichment of the United Nations website has improved,[17] and, in this regard, requests the Department of Public Information, in coordination with content-providing offices, to further improve the actions taken to achieve full parity among the six official languages on the United Nations website, and especially reiterates its request to ensure the adequate distribution of financial and human resources within the Department of Public Information allocated to the United Nations website among all official languages, taking into consideration the specificity of each official language;

62. *Welcomes* the cooperative arrangements undertaken by the Department of Public Information with academic institutions to increase the number of web pages available in some official languages, and requests the Secretary-General to extend those arrangements to all the official languages of the United Nations;

63. *Recalls* paragraph 74 of its resolution 60/109 B, and in this regard reiterates that all content-providing offices in the Secretariat should continue their efforts to translate into all official languages all English-language materials and databases posted on the United Nations website and to make them available on the respective language websites in the most practical, efficient and cost-effective manner;

64. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to take full advantage of new developments in information technology in order to improve, in a cost-effective manner, the expeditious dissemination of information on the United Nations, in accordance with the priorities established by the General Assembly in its resolutions and taking into account the linguistic diversity of the Organization;

65. *Recognizes* that some official languages use non-Latin and bidirectional scripts and that technological infrastructures and supportive applications in the United Nations are based on Latin script, which leads to difficulties in processing non-Latin and bidirectional scripts, and urges the Information Technology Services Division of the Department of Management to further collaborate with the Department of Public Information and to continue its efforts to ensure that technological infrastructures and supportive applications in the United Nations fully support Latin, non-Latin and bidirectional scripts in order to enhance the equality of all official languages on the United Nations website;

66. *Welcomes* the continuing growth in the popularity of the e-mail news alerts service provided by the Department of Public Information on the United Nations News Centre portal in English and French, and encourages the Department to consult with the Information Technology Services Division of the Department of Management and to explore, as a matter of priority, ways of upgrading the technical capabilities of the service and providing it in all official languages;

[17] See A/AC.198/2007/3.

V
Library services

67. *Calls upon* the Department of Public Information to continue to lead the Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries and further commends the steps taken by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the other member libraries of the Steering Committee to align their activities, services and outputs more closely with the goals, objectives and operational priorities of the Organization;

68. *Reiterates* the need to maintain a multilingual collection of books, periodicals and other materials in hard copy, accessible to Member States, ensuring that the Library continues to be a broadly accessible resource for information about the United Nations and its activities;

69. *Takes note* of the initiative taken by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, in its capacity as the focal point, to expand the scope of the regional training and knowledge-sharing workshops organized for the depository libraries in developing countries to include outreach in their activities;

70. *Acknowledges* the role of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, in enhancing knowledge-sharing and networking activities to ensure access to the vast store of United Nations knowledge for delegates, permanent missions of Member States, the Secretariat, researchers and depository libraries worldwide, takes note of the proposal to rename the library the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and Knowledge-Sharing Centre, reflecting its new direction, and also takes note of the proposal to change the designation of the depository libraries to partner libraries;

71. *Notes with appreciation* the Personal Knowledge Management initiative to assist representatives of Member States and Secretariat staff in the use of information products and tools as a complement to the traditional training programmes;

72. *Encourages* the Secretariat to develop and implement cost-neutral measures to provide Member States with secure access to the information currently accessible only on the Intranet of the Secretariat (iSeek), taking note that Member States have access to iSeek only through the facilities of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library;

VI
Outreach services

73. *Acknowledges* that the outreach services provided by the Department of Public Information continue to work towards promoting awareness of the role and work of the United Nations;

74. *Welcomes* the educational outreach activities of the Department of Public Information, through the United Nations Works programme and the Global Teaching and Learning Project, to reach educators and young people worldwide via a range of multimedia platforms, and encourages the United Nations Works programme to continue to develop further its partnerships with global media networks and celebrity advocates and the Global Teaching and Learning Project to further expand its activities to teachers and students in primary, intermediate and secondary schools;

75. *Notes* the importance of the continued implementation by the Department of Public Information of the ongoing programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, as mandated by the General Assembly, and requests the Department to consider how best to maximize the benefits derived from the programme by extending, inter alia, its duration and the number of its participants;

76. *Welcomes* the movement towards educational outreach and the orientation of the *UN Chronicle*, both print and online editions, and, to this end, encourages the *UN Chronicle* to continue to develop co-publishing partnerships, collaborative educational activities and events, including the "Unlearning Intolerance" seminar series, with civil society organizations and institutions of higher learning;

77. *Takes note* of the intention of the Department of Public Information to have the *UN Chronicle* magazine evolve into a journal called "UN Affairs", and requests, for further consideration, a comprehensive and detailed report on the progress of the project in due course;

78. *Considers it necessary* for the Department of Public Information to clearly identify practical improvements intended by the change from the *UN Chronicle* to "UN Affairs", taking into account parity of languages, editorial policy, potential qualitative gains and other improvements and urges that the Department, while considering these aspects, place emphasis on cost-effective measures and the present budgetary constraints, and welcomes any other alternative in line with the mandate of the Department for the consideration of Member States;[18]

79. *Requests* the Department of Public Information to continue the *UN Chronicle* until a decision is taken on "UN Affairs" or any other alternative in line with the mandate of the Department;

80. *Reaffirms* the important role that guided tours play as a means of reaching out to the general public, and takes note of the efforts undertaken by the Department of Public Information in organizing exhibitions on important United Nations-related issues within existing mandates at United Nations Headquarters and at other United Nations offices as a useful tool for reaching out to the general public;

81. *Requests* the Department of Public Information to strengthen its role as a focal point for two-way interaction with civil society relating to those priorities and concerns of the Organization identified by Member States;

82. *Commends*, in a spirit of cooperation, the United Nations Correspondents Association for its ongoing activities and for its Dag Hammarskjöld Memorial Scholarship Fund, which sponsors journalists from developing countries to come to the United Nations Headquarters and report on the activities during the General Assembly, and further encourages the international community to continue its financial support for the Fund;

83. *Expresses its appreciation* for the efforts and contribution of United Nations Messengers of Peace, Goodwill Ambassadors and other advocates to promote the work of the United Nations and to enhance international public

[18] At the 14th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, held on 22 October 2008, the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information stated that, in the light of the current budgetary situation, it was his intention not to ask for additional resources (see A/C.4/63/SR.14).

awareness of its priorities and concerns, and calls upon the Department of Public Information to continue to involve them in its communications and media strategies and outreach activities;

VII
Final remarks

84. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its thirty-first session and to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session on the activities of the Department of Public Information and on the implementation of all recommendations and requests contained in the present resolution;

85. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to make every effort to ensure that the level of services provided by the Department of Public Information is maintained throughout the period of the implementation of the capital master plan;

86. *Strongly urges* the Secretary-General to accede to the request by Member States to provide additional passes to press officers of Member States to gain access to areas that are deemed restricted, in order to effectively and comprehensively report on high-level meetings that include officials of delegations of Member States;

87. *Requests* the Committee on Information to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session;

88. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-fourth session the item entitled "Questions relating to information".

15. The Fourth Committee also recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

Increase in the membership of the Committee on Information

The General Assembly decides to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from one hundred ten to one hundred twelve and to appoint Antigua and Barbuda and Zambia as members of the Committee.